

Nov. 16 & 17 & 19th 1850
Pontulas House

Dear Charlie,

It seems to come each one's turn to be occasionally cut with a short letter. But one cannot control events. Tell her ever that saying Mrs. Jackson, that I do not think the comparison between the stocking basket & journal holds at all - In the first place, the stocking-basket is a thing of the past - Then if she were here she would ^{find} much writing & so many things to do hard to accomplish. If she were to look at my letter-book she would see that I have not been idle; & then there is sewing to fill old memories which one can't carry down stairs, walking takes a good deal of time, now that it is dark soon after five; and then it is cold & sick writing in one's room, & the fire is only lighted there shortly before dressing-time; it is not agreeable, nor does it seem to me quite sociable & civil to be writing much down stairs, & not particularly so sitting a long time every day up - Besides we read aloud in the morning, I have sundry sketches often for others, & occasionally a drawing to trace from some of Mrs. Bentham's botanical plates for Dr. Gray. I'll count up sometimes, the number of sheets of journal, & the letters & notes I have written from Pontulas. And then prick her to the heart!

But I left my journal very abruptly, saying (as Mrs. Bentham expected - viz. Mr. Harcourt & Lady Frances Harcourt - a daughter of the late & sister of the present Earl of Bedford - or Lord Bedford, as they always call it. And now be enlightened, oh ignorant Americans! & know that when the daughter of a peer or Lady, she keeps it when she is married - though her husband has no bit of a title at all - He is still plain Mr. or Esq. but she doesn't become Mrs. but still the Lady Ann or Lady Fanny or so his name - So Earl Somers' daughter is Lady Harriet ^{the Mrs. Grey Somers} Grey Somers (euphonious that!) whose as a baronet's wife or a knight, who has a Sir, is Lady with his last name, as Lady Bynges, Lady Hooker. - Mr. Harcourt is son of the late Archbishop of York & of old family, but is a rather bluff, rather red faced, not very stout, oldish, gentleman, checked in monstrous cravat. He is not much of a talker, but has travelled a great deal, & when he does speak is sensible & agreeable - Though his style is rather jerky - Lady Frances is best described as fat, fair & forty - Quite handsome, with a charming smile, so full & manly & good natured - As Mrs. Bentham says of her "she looks very happy herself, & glad to make others so". She had a little of the English diffidence at first, but it truly pleasant when you get over that - she is always busy sewing or drawing &c. & indeed the English ladies generally are, some fancy work or some thing seems always at hand to take up in the evening, or when sitting down. We had a very pleasant dinner Monday, for Mrs & Miss Bentham & the

Harcourts have travelled so much in Germany & Russia, & Turkey & Italy, that there were many new & interesting things to hear - Mrs. W. posted from Petersburg to Odessa 4 years ago, & have at various times passed winters in Vienna, in Florence, &c. &c. They have travelled a great deal in Europe - & I am trying to persuade them to turn their faces westward. - Under the rose, I would say, that I at hold of Lady Brydges bows, by a little manoeuvring, & civilized a little the trimmings of the Westmoreland - For I thought it a shame this bride should appear in such garb, & she has had no chance to get to London as yet & get clothes - And between you & I English ladies have not much still in contriving trimmings - Now should they for the maid or the mistress be pretty much alike. I have come to the conclusion that a maid is an expensive luxury, to judge from the amount of what the maid said it would take to make a dressing from the room for Mrs. Bentham - And if I had ^(a maid) ~~one~~, would certainly trim my caps myself. But a good maid makes her lady's dresses, gets up her hair, & makes her caps, & trims her bonnets, besides her plain work, & always dressing her hair, &c. & putting out what she is to wear, & putting away what is taken off. - I should have said before that Sir Fairfax departed in the morning for Boulogne to pay a short visit to Colonel Sandmore, & meantime Lady Brydges occupied the single room to leave the large room & dressing-room for the Harcourts. Tuesday morning was passed in sewing, &c. &c. There being so many ladies we scattered more than usual. After lunch Lady Gannoy said her carriage was at Mrs. B.'s service, & it was proposed we should drive to Kentchurch - The carriage would only hold three, so Mrs. Bentham proposed, as we were the walkers, that one should walk there & the other back - So I gladly agreed to walk there with the gentlemen. Dr. Gray thought he could not stay all the afternoon, so I discreetly & quietly accompanied the gentlemen, & as I am possessing control over my tongue, scarcely ventured a remark, & only listened to their conversation, which turned some-what on building cottages for the labourers &c. - It seems Mr. Clive is doing a great deal in that way - One likes so much what they hear about him - He seems to be such a good landlord. - They spoke kindly of the labourers, & yet it sounded strangely the sort of quiet way in which they talked of them as beneath, & expected to be beneath; in truth what I think strikes me most is the general want of feeling that the lower classes stand on the same broad platform of morality & humanity - I can't exactly say what is the feeling, but it is disagreeable to me - And I sometimes feel how after all we stand all alike as Christians, & how the first shall be last & the last first - They cannot understand ~~that~~, & when I speak of anyone rising to fill the first place from any place, they say "Oh, so it is here!" & bring forward instances -

But here there are exceptions with us the rule - Now don't imagine, Sue, I deliver orations or pronounce lectures - I feel as if what I should say would not be understood; & then the older I grow the less inclined am I to plunge into battles for principles, partly I fear that I care less for them, partly that a great deal of enthusiasm is damped & gone, & partly that I more & more distrust my own powers & capability - And I fear lest foolish words injure the good cause. - So I listen & am still. But you meet some helpful, "dreadful radicals" others call them, who seem to feel quite differently - And I like Mr. Fowler because he feels more as we do at home. But of course this feeling is perfectly natural in people born & brought up as they are - Their caste is acknowledged by all -

Kentchurch looked finely but not so well as when we were there before the leaves had fallen very much - We went into the lower rooms this time - There are fine suites of apartments, & very handsome passages & entries, the entrance was floored with stone & arched, the next oak - The rooms of course looked bare & desolate, for the carpets were up & the covers of the furniture, & everything smuffed up - I should like to see them when the family are there - They hope to return about the 1st of December - It seems to me a wonderfully speedy recovery - Col. Sandmore can get about already on crutches with the help of his servant, & it is only three months since one leg was broken & the knee-joint of the other shattered - The found quantities of bloody violets in the beds, & some most superb anemones, almost as large as a poppy, red & blue & cream - Mrs. Bentham walked back, & I took her place in the carriage - Lady Gannoy was very pleasant, & asked after Mr. Everett, whom she had heard speak once in Hereford at some public meeting - She said he was much regretted in England - He had a pleasant social evening - Wednesday morning at breakfast came as usual my package of letters - From Sue from Mr. Bartol & a line from you, Charlie - Thank you, Charlie, for your particular care about grandfather - Dear, dear grandfather! I am sure another week cannot bring me news of his being still living - It is very, very sad to receive sad news away from home to amongst strangers - And I had so hoped when I left home to see him again! - But it would be a relief to hear of his death, for I would not have seen him live to see her - And I fear he did, from the last accounts - So thank Mr. Bartol very much for the letter from him, & say I will answer it soon - I was so very much gratified by receiving it - You must have had a fine autumn, roses & honey-suckles still at Beverly at the end of October! - Thank Patrick for sending keeping the letters to send me the latest news - Pray give Anna & Isaac.

kindest remembrances from me if she is still in Boston. Sam means to be
quite a linguist, but I am glad of it. As many languages as one can have
the better. Tell her to teach Pat & Charlie as much French as she can
now. It will be good practice to talk it with them, & save trouble
as they grow older when they come to study it. The children here are
taught French very young, the mother often speaks it with them, and
so when grown up they talk with great ease. And faults & blunders are
more easily cured than a new language is acquired. - As to the shingling
at Cambridge, what is it? Nothing more than the back kitchen, I suppose,
for nothing else needed it. - The initials which you liked so much, Geo.,
they have just been reading here; & Mrs. Bentham says it is a capital
picture of the manners in Munich & Germany. -

Lady Fanny was so obliging as to promise to copy a drawing, which
Mrs. Bentham has off Contrilas house, for me. Mrs. Bentham had
told me she would let it copied for me, when I proposed making a
same attempt myself. It is such a nice picturesque old house. And
Mrs. B. asked Lady Fanny, who draws very nicely, & she kindly agreed, &
began Wednesday morn. before they left. They went at 12. Meantime
Mr. Bentham had been advising Dr. Fay to stay a little longer, as there
was still so much work to do, & so Dr. Fay thought, & was not very hard
to persuade to postpone our departure for Dublin for a week, so I wrote to
that effect to Dr. Harney. Then Dr. Fay & I went off to ^{lunch} ~~supper~~ with the
Fowles to meet a clergyman who had been in America, & was tutor for a
while to Henry Clay's sons. He was very anxious to meet an American.
Such a party of black coats as were there! Friends staying with them, the
gentleman & particularly liked, an Uncle of Mrs. Fowles. Mrs. Fowles showed
me some beautiful plaster medals of some of the more famous works of Thorvaldsen,
Canova, Antiques, &c. sulphurs they call them. - They were lovely.
The party walked back ^{early} to Contrilas with us Thursday morn. I wrote
diligently, & was up in good time. - We thought Mrs. Clive would come to take
us to the ploughing match at 1, instead of which she appeared at 11, & we
had to just fold our letters, & hurry on our bonnets & with the britschka. There
were 3 of us, Mrs. Clive & a young nameless lady with her, Mrs. Bentham, Lady
Joy & myself. It was a wonderfully easy carriage, & the nice words
deserve us. We met at the field quite an equestrian troupe from Whitfield
(^{Countess of Egmont}) Mrs. Clive & Mrs. Wicksted on horses, Mrs. Wicksted (Mrs. Clive's sister) & Lady Egmont,
Maizey, Alice & a young daughter of Mrs. W's on ponies, & all but Lady Egmont
coming from Mr. Clive's stables. I saw ploughing with one two & three horses tandem!
& 2 horses abreast (y.d. ploughing) & hedging, but cannot say I was as much edu-
cated as I wished, as I had no one to ask questions, though Mrs. Clive helped me through
a hedge to see the hedging, after we got out of the carriage, & partly explained it -
^{but I was afraid of being a bore}

Dear Father & Mother,

I last left my journal at the receipt of the ploughing match - I was in hopes, dear Father, to have learnt something which should be amazingly idyllic to you on English farming matters - But I cannot say that I have succeeded. In general matters about such different grounds, that what does for one will not do for the other, & climate & cheap labour make the whole of air quite different. And then I have very little opportunity of learning the ladies indeed a good deal. Sometimes I seem to understand it, but then again, their cool climate & cloudy sky is really to their advantage. - As for cattle, they are generally very good looking, but I am not very learned. I can only say that I scarcely saw a red cow between Sligo, Lond & Arrer, they were white or the Durham colour - whereas here it is quite an exception to see anything but a red cow with a white face. Mrs. Bentham has a nice little Alderney cow which supplies them with milk, cream & butter! She must be a good milker, for they must use a great deal of butter. But now they say, as she is dying y's. - But then again it must be an easy matter to keep a cow here, where they can be pastured pretty much all the year! - They have a nice fashion of serving the butter at breakfast in little ^{planned} pots about the size of a pint, & floating in water. But such delicious butter as one finds even where in England & on the Continent? I am afraid I shall despise the common productions of our market at home - It is generally quite fresh, & a salt cellar is put upon the table for those who like more salt. - And as for the people who were so cruel, I did not see much more of them - Nor did I much care - Lady Oxford's marriage with a man at Lord Oxford is quite enough in my opinion though, I could not seem to think it strange here - Lord Oxford is a miserable, mean, greedy, & intemperate fellow they say half the time - He was a younger son neglected in his youth & left to roam about the streets of Rome - But the elder brother meeting with an accidental death he came into the Earldom. He is moreover in straitened circumstances - a not uncommon thing going with the title as far as I can judge -